

1st grade: 6, 45 minute sessions
Healthy Expression of Emotions

Objectives:

1. Students will learn a variety of ways to change their attitudes, feelings, and behaviors through games.
2. Students will be able to distinguish between healthy and unhealthy expressions of negative emotions.

Rationale:

Anger is a problem for many children. In fact, the inability to control anger is one of the most common reasons that children are referred to counseling. Left untreated, anger problems can influence many aspects of children's development, putting them more at risk for low self-esteem, schools drop-out, social isolation, and a host of other mental concerns. Not surprisingly, these are some of the same risk factors that can contribute to a child growing up to become an abuser in an intimate partner relationship.

However in addition to addressing negative behaviors, this curriculum is designed to bestow upon students positive behaviors at a young age. Positive behaviors included in this curriculum include, creating compromise, talking about feelings, and taking responsibility for their own actions - all protective factors in preventing the perpetration of intimate partner violence later in life.

Sessions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 (all the same):

Supplies:

- Dr. Playwell's Games® - various games listed below by Childsworld Childsplay (to order, call Sunburst Media @ 1-800-431-1934)
- "What I Learned" - worksheets (can be printed on white or colored paper)
- Decorating materials: crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc.

The Games:

- Anger Buttons: helps children understand the things that trigger their anger and realize that they have other choices of how to respond which turn "off" their anger.
- Stop Yourself: designed to teach children to see alternatives to angry behavior, to create compromises, and to act in prosocial ways that will get them positive attention.
- Cool Down: teaches children that there are different ways to relax and calm down when they are angry or stressed.
- Wheel of Feelings: helps children realize that they can talk about their feelings, rather than just acting out on them.
- Race for Responsibility: designed to teach children the importance of having responsible behaviors and attitudes.
- Creating Compromises: helps children create good compromises to meet their needs, rather than acting out their frustration.

Implement:

Games: (35 minutes)

- Divide students into 6 groups of 2 or more.
- Give each group a game and select one student to be the "referee". This student will play the game along with the rest of the group, but s/he will also make sure that no one cheats or begins to argue. Tell the "referee" that s/he is responsible for getting an adults attention if their group has any problems. (In all sessions, keep the same groups from session 1 and make sure students are playing games they haven't already played.)
- Go around the room and get each group started. For each game listed, instruct the students on how to play and read the corresponding blurb (on the next page) to them before they get started.
- Allow 30 minutes for each group to play their game.

Evaluation: (10 minutes)

- For the last 10 minutes, allow students to decorate their "What I Learned" sheets. As the facilitator, go around the room and discuss with students what they learned.

- Anger Buttons: Everyone gets angry at times, and certain things seem to make us angry more than others. This game will help you see the kinds of things that make you angry and help you think about the things you can do to change them.
- Stop Yourself: Every time you feel angry, you have a choice about how to behave. When you make positive choices, you will feel better about yourself, and other people will treat you better, too.
- Cool Down: It is important to calm yourself down when you are upset. There are many ways to learn to "cool down", which all have the same effect - you will feel better and get better control of your anger.
- Wheel of Feelings: The more you talk about your feelings the better you will feel. The more you talk about your feelings, the better you can learn to control them.
- Race for Responsibility: Good values are important in every area of your life. When you act responsibly, you will gain both self-respect and respect for others.
- Creating Compromises: Many people - adults and children - get mad when they don't get their way. But when you create compromises, you will find that you can almost always get some of what you want. The more you show that you are willing to compromise in a calm and friendly way, the more other people will want to see your point of view.

What I Learned